

Sustainability Policy



March 2024

Scoil Maelruain Sinsear

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Policy Rationale:

Scoil Maelruain Senior aims to become a sustainable school by reducing our ecological footprint through adopting sustainable practices in our everyday lives. We will achieve this by integrating sustainability into many areas of the curriculum, instilling a sense of ownership and pride in improving the environment, and participating in An Taisce's Green-Schools programme. We will aim to lead the community by demonstrating exemplary practices in waste management, water and energy usage, promoting environmentally friendly transport, and developing the school grounds to promote biodiversity.

Relationship to School Ethos:

Sustainability is central to the ethos of Scoil Maelruain Senior through the teaching of Environmental Awareness and Care in the Geography, Science, and SPHE curricula. Scoil Maelruain Senior encourages children to become active agents in the conservation of environments for future generations. Positive values and attitudes towards the environment and the appreciation of the interrelationships of all living things and their environments are fostered in the school.

Aims:

With this policy the Board of Management of Scoil Maelruain Senior hopes;

- To respect the environment and develop a sense of responsibility for its long-term care.
- To appreciate the environment and realise that each individual has a community and individual responsibility for protecting and caring for the environment.
- To be custodians of the environment for future generations.
- To develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment.
- To become aware of the impact of air, water, waste, and litter pollution on natural and man-made environments.
- To promote the sustainable use of the Earth's resources through personal lifestyle and participation in collective environmental decision making.
- To develop an understanding of energy and water conservation.
- To promote environmentally-friendly methods of transport to and from school.
- To enable the child to live as an informed and caring member of local, national, European and global communities.

- To understand the positive and negative impact that people can have on the environment.
- To foster and promote biodiversity in the school environment.

Procedures and Guidelines:

How to reduce the school's ecological footprint:

Energy

- Reduce the use of energy consumption within the school.
- Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- Include students in the process of developing and maintaining an energy efficient school through participation in Green-Schools.

Litter and Waste

- To minimise waste and recycle our waste throughout the school, as much as possible, on a daily basis.
- To encourage reusing of materials rather than disposal.
- To grant responsibility to students for disposing of waste in the appropriate manner.

Biodiversity

- To utilise our school environment to promote biodiversity.
- To utilise our school and local environment to build an awareness of biodiversity.

Water

- To reduce the water consumption within the school.
- To use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- To monitor water usage and report wastage.

Travel

- To encourage environmentally-friendly means of transport to and from school.

Implementation:

The school will continue to participate in Green-Schools and work towards obtaining Green flags. The school currently has Green flags in Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Travel, and Biodiversity. Every class will participate in Environmental Awareness and Care as part of the Geography, Science, and SPHE curricula. The whole school community will be involved and informed in the work of the Green-Schools

Committee through regular updates, the school newsletter, and on the Green-Schools noticeboard located in the school hall.

Energy

- Promote a 'switch off and save' rule for technological equipment, lighting and heating particularly when leaving the classroom to go to the yard and school hall.
- Engage students in units of work relating to energy in SESE and SPHE.
- Members of the Green-Schools Committee will act as classroom energy monitors ensuring that all appliances are completely switched off when not being used to conserve energy.

Litter and Waste

- Students are consistently reminded to dispose of waste and recycled products in the appropriate manner.
- Use recycled paper for printer or photocopier where possible.
- Promote the reuse of paper in classrooms, resource rooms, and the school office.
- Recycling bins are provided in the school.
- Battery recycling bins are provided in the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to bring in their own hand towel to dry their hands and minimize paper towel waste.
- Pupils are encouraged to bring in their own reusable bottle to minimise single-use plastic bottles.
- A set of litter pickers and a wheelable bin are available for litter picking on school grounds.

Biodiversity

- Engage students and staff in the maintenance of our courtyard gardens and flower beds.
- Improve our outdoor natural environment by planting native trees.
- Plant native plants and wild flowers that encourage and support the insect population, such as bees and butterflies.
- Use natural materials that reduce the impact on the environment.
- Use recycled materials that reduce the impact on the environment.
- Provide varied habitats, such as insect hotels, log piles, hedgerows, walls, grassy areas, bird houses, and trees, to offer potential food and shelter to our local wildlife.
- Support our native birds (particularly during the winter months) by providing bird feeders and trees on the school grounds.
- Promote an awareness of the importance of biodiversity through the SESE and SPHE curricula.

Water

- Remind students and staff regularly the importance of turning off the tap when water is flowing.
- Students to engage in units of work relating to water conservation in SESE and SPHE.
- Caretaker to regularly monitor water usage and report wastage.

Travel

- Students and parents are encouraged to cycle, scoot, walk, or park and stride to school. Each class undertakes a survey of transport used weekly as part of Green-Schools Walk-On-Wednesday programme.
- A “Safe Street” area is present at front school gate in collaboration with South Dublin County Council.
- 6th class pupils participate in cycling workshops.
- Two bicycle sheds are provided for bicycle and scooter storage during the school day.

Other initiatives:

Awards and Competitions:

- Each year the school has a Hallowe'en art and costume competition using recycled materials.
- Each year the school has a Christmas art competition using recycled materials.
- As part of Walk-On-Wednesday the class with the best transport score wins the 'Golden Boot' trophy.
- There are regular competitions and awards through the Green-Schools programme.

Lunchboxes

- It is encouraged that whatever comes in the child's lunchbox goes home in the lunchbox - i.e. a yoghurt pot, a wrapper as it dramatically cuts down on the schools waste.
- Pupils are encouraged to use a reusable bottle daily.

Re-Use

- Staff will reuse items for art and construction materials.

Book Rental Scheme

- The school will continue to implement a book rental scheme to minimize unnecessary waste.

Aladdin Schools

- Parents will be texted or emailed school information on Aladdin instead of sending out individual letters with each child. This cuts down greatly on the amount of paper being used by the school.

Green-Schools

- Scoil Maelruain Senior will continue to participate in the Green-Schools programme.
- The Green-Schools flag will be displayed on a flag pole by the school entrance.
- Pupils will participate in special occasion events as part of Green-Schools such as National Tree Day, Biodiversity week, and Walk to School Week.

Picker-Pals

- Scoil Maelruain Senior will continue to participate in the Picker Pals programme. A student each week uses a set of litter pickers to collect waste in their local area with their parent or guardian's supervision.

Community Involvement:

- We will encourage community participation in environmental projects undertaken, as well as, invite parents with expertise to help maintain and improve our school environment.
- We will promote sustainable living through educating the school community through our students.

Success Criteria:

The school wide implementation of this policy will ensure:

- Continuous participation in the Green-Schools programme and the aspiration to be rewarded further Green-Schools' flags.
- Continuous improvement, development, and use of the school gardens and grounds.
- Children will participate in lessons throughout the year on areas of sustainability and environmental awareness and care in the SESE and SPHE curricula.

Roles and Responsibility:

The following people have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy:

- School Caretaker
- School Secretary
- Special Needs Assistants
- Teachers
- Parents/ Guardians
- Principal
- Board of Management
- Students
- Student Council
- Green-Schools Committee
- Creative Schools Committee

Implementation:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

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Revision of This Sustainability Statement:

This statement shall be regularly revised by the Board of Management of Scoil Maelruain Senior.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Ratification and Communication:

This policy was circulated to the members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting in at which it was formally ratified. Notification that the policy is available for viewing will be communicated to the parents in the next School Communication, via Aladdin. It will be available for viewing on the school website and a copy will be available to all staff on Google Drive.